



WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Test Exceptions and False LEP Guidance

WIDA Test Exceptions

Below is a list of student groups for whom a Test Exception, or waiver, from the Spring 2016 WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs could be available. It may be many students who were approved as Test Exceptions in prior years will be expected to test this coming spring. These new Test Exception criteria have been created following a directive from the U.S. Department of Education to ensure all English Learners (ELs) who are also Students with Disabilities (SWDs) are tested.

Student groups for whom a test exception from the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 could be available:

- K – 2nd grade students who are visually impaired and are in the process of learning braille
- K students who use American Sign Language (ASL) as their primary method of communication could be allowed to not take assessments in all domains
- 1st – 12th grade students who use American Sign Language (ASL) as their primary method of communication could be allowed to not take assessments in Speaking and Listening domains (WIDA considers the usage of ASL on this assessment a non-standard accommodation)
- K-12 students who have mutism as identified on their IEP/504 plan may be exempt from the Speaking domain

Student groups for whom a test exception from the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs could be available:

- 1st – 12th grade students who are visually impaired (learning braille) and cognitively impaired (there is no braille version of the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs)

- 1st – 12th grade students who use American Sign Language (ASL) as their primary method of communication could be allowed to not take the Speaking and Listening domains (WIDA considers the usage of ASL on this assessment a non-standard accommodation)
- 1st -12 students who have mutism as identified on their IEP/504 plan may be exempt from the Speaking domain

Districts that would like to request a Test Exception for a student must make the request on an annual basis through the MDE Secure Site. An approval for 1-3 domains of the assessment will still result in the student receiving an overall proficiency level score. The WIDA Test Exception window is open from **December 7, 2015 through January 8, 2016**. Directions for submitting WIDA Test Exceptions can be found at www.michigan.gov/securesitetraining under the Quick Reference section.

Test Exception approvals will not negatively impact any of a district's accountability measures. If you have any questions, please send them in an email to baa@michigan.gov (use "WIDA" in the subject line) or call 877-560-8378.

Correction of Records for Students Incorrectly Designated as Limited English Proficient "false LEPs"):

A significant number of limited English proficient (LEP) students are not being assessed on the annual ELP assessment (WIDA). This is a violation of the ESEA legislation and requirements. Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) have shared that one of the reasons certain students were not tested was because they were falsely coded as LEP in MSDS due to human error (e.g., data entry personnel inadvertently reported a student as LEP when the student's home language and primary language is English).

A team from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has created an annual process by which LEAs may submit an appeal to MDE requesting a review of “false LEP” cases for a final resolution and possible correction within MSD.

To request correction of “false LEP” records, districts must enter the information and required documents described below using the WIDA Test Exceptions function on the Secure Site between **December 7, 2015 and January 8, 2016**. Directions for submitting WIDA Test Exceptions and “false LEP” appeals can be found at www.mi.gov/securesitetraining under the Quick Reference section.

If the LEA’s request is approved by MDE’s Title III team, the student will continue to be reported as LEP in MSDS only for the 2015-16 academic year but will not participate in the Spring WIDA, 2016 or beyond.

Prior to submitting your request to correct “false LEP” records, please read the information below carefully:

Who is a “false LEP”?

A “false LEP” is an English speaker, as determined by the **initial** home language survey (HLS) completed by parents upon the **first** enrollment in **any** local educational agency (LEA) in the state of Michigan. Appealing districts are responsible for securing this historical information from other districts.

What to Submit: Districts submitting an appeal to resolve a “false LEP” case must:

1. Submit/upload to the Secure Site the initial home language survey of the “false LEP” student completed by parents upon the first enrollment in any local educational agency (LEA) in the state of Michigan. All responses on the students’ initial HLS must indicate that the student’s primary language and the student’s home language is English.
2. Attest/certify that the uploaded HLS is identical to the original document. A signature of the local district’s program director fulfills this requirement.

3. Ensure the HLS was signed by the student’s parent/guardian and not signed on behalf of the parent/guardian.
4. Provide an explanation of the discrepancy between the original HLS and MSDS coding of LEP.
5. Submit the request in the MSE secure site no later than **January 8, 2016**.

The MDE Title III team *will not* review requests for changing a LEP status to a non-LEP status if:

1. The request is not submitted by **January 8, 2016**.
2. The request submitted to OFS lacks **any** of the required documents and information listed above.
3. The student transitions to another LEA and the parent/guardian fills out a new home language survey reporting that the child speaks English and the home language is English while previously a second language, other than English was reported.
4. The parent/guardian wants to withdraw the LEP student from the program and fills out a new home language survey.
5. A bilingual parent and an English speaker parent share parenting time and the English-speaking parent completes a new home language survey indicating that the child speaks English.
6. The LEP/EL student whose native language is a language other than English is placed in a foster care home with English-speaking foster parent(s). The foster parent(s) will complete a new home language survey and indicate that both native language and home language is English.

For details, please refer to the communication sent to Title III Directors by Shereen Tabrizi, Ph.D., Education Consultant Manager, Office of Field Services. Please direct questions or concerns regarding “false LEP” to **LaTrese Royal**, Analyst, Office of Field Services at **517 373-7307** or at RoyalL@michigan.gov.